

The Kynical Academic Librarian and Institutional Declericalization

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This research is a critical and cultural analysis of the modern academic library and the profession of modern academic librarianship as cultural/ideological institutions that serve the role of defining and reproducing sociocultural structures in modern capitalist society. Specifically, it explores the role of the religious symbolisms and implicit rituals of the modern secular academic library as a powerful state institution and “sacred space,” using the work of Ludwig Feuerbach and others to understand these symbolisms and rituals’ part in generating and maintaining oppressive hegemonic structures in society. Methods employed include historiographical explorations and a critical/dialectical analysis of the pertinent relationships found between the library as an institution and other cultural and political institutions. In light of this analysis, I suggest strategies for subverting dominant, oppressive structures that relate directly to issues important to diversity, inclusion, and social and economic justice. These strategies are both post-professional and kynical (i.e., employing subversive rhetoric and lived truth), drawing upon the work of theorists such as Ivan Illich and Peter Sloterdijk.